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SUBJECT: 15TH PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN-U.S. TRIPARTITE MEETING

Classified By: Derived from DSCG 05-01, b and d

11. (C) Summary: The 15th U.S.-Afghanistan-Pakistan Tripartite Commission meeting, held at Bagram on February 25, was characterized by frank discussion between the Afghan and Pakistani delegations. The agenda focused on cross-border issues, intelligence sharing, steps to counter IEDs, and the link between enhancing security, governance and reconstruction. Participants noted that the open discussion was a sign of the usefulness of the Tripartite Commission and of growing comfort levels between Pakistani and Afghan counterparts, but both delegations emphasized the need to cultivate trust as the key enabler for continued progress. (Contrary to press reports, the Pakistanis did not cite the Bajaur incident, though their allusion to "increased border violations" was clearly a reference to the incident. The U.S. response "noted" Pakistan's concerns, while emphasizing the need to take effective measures to counter the threat posed by the common enemy.) End summary.

12. (C) On February 25, Afghan, Pakistani and U.S. military representatives met at Bagram for the 15th Tripartite Commission meeting. The Pakistani delegation was led by Major General Yousef, Director General of Military Operations, and the Afghan delegation by ANA Chief of Operations Lieutenant General Karimi. The U.S. delegation was led by CFC-A Commander Lieutenant General Eikenberry. The NATO-ISAF observer was Brigadier General Tabor, Special Advisor to the NATO-ISAF Commander. Khowst officials, including the Governor and his provincial police chief, the RC East Commander, the Khowst PRT Commander, and PRT civilian representatives from State and USAID participated via a VTC link. Presentations were made by the Chairs of the Border Security Sub-committee, the Counter-IED Working Group, and the Military Intelligence Sharing Working Group.

13. (C) The focus of the 15th tripartite was civil-military affairs, including enhanced military-military cooperation and the importance of improving security through reconstruction and governance on both sides of the border. Briefing topics included a US presentation on how PRTs function, and a following briefing focused specifically on Khowst province,

with a range of Khowst officials offering their insights on civil/military cooperation. The Pakistan delegation provided an in-depth briefing on its three-tiered (military-political-development) strategy in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Beyond civ/mil issues, the delegations had in-depth discussions on ways to enhance intelligence sharing and to deepen cooperation on combating IEDs. The NATO observer briefed on NATO transition in Afghanistan.

Countering IEDs

¶4. (S) Discussions began with a substantive exchange on strategies to counter the growing threat of IEDs. It was agreed that a common database of the types of IEDs used/found should be developed. Both sides underscored the need for improved intelligence sharing in creating this database. The Pakistani side pointed out that a lack of technical capability in protecting forces against IEDs weakens Pakistan's ability to manage the growing use of IEDs. Afghan representatives noted that as the majority of casualties from IEDs are civilians, engaging border area inhabitants on both sides through a public information campaign to teach civilians to identify an IED and to notify authorities would be useful. The session ended with LTG Eikenberry emphasis on the need to attack all nodes of the IED employment and attack cycle by aligning counter-IED efforts into a comprehensive framework that incorporates intelligence, public engagement and information, attack against IED cells, TTP (tactics, techniques, and procedures), force protection, and exploitation. Pointing to an example of the relationship

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between security and development (the theme of the talks), LTG Eikenberry noted that in Konar Province, the paving of a stretch of road had dramatically reduced the volume of IED attacks.

Intelligence Sharing

¶5. (S) After a briefing on the last meeting of the Military Intelligence Sharing Working Group, Pakistani Director of Military Intelligence, Brigadier General Reza Muhammad, stated that intelligence that was neither timely nor actionable, no matter how well-shared, was akin to having a "doctor after death." The Afghan side responded that they often provide actionable intelligence -- especially regarding the location of Taliban and Al Qaeda in Pakistani territory and the use of madrassas as recruitment centers -- but they rarely see results. Both sides emphasized the need for greater intelligence sharing at the tactical level and faster response times to take maximum advantage of opportunities for action against insurgents or drug traffickers.

Continued Cross-Border Violations

¶6. (S) Pakistani and Afghan delegations discussed continued cross-border movement)- in both directions -- of insurgents, arms, and drugs. The Pakistani delegation cited cases of Afghan weapons smuggled into Balochistan and the flow of "miscreants" from Afghanistan into Pakistan. The Afghan side noted examples of Pakistani citizens in Afghanistan caught planning suicide bombings in Kandahar and Taliban insurgents arrested entering Afghanistan. Pakistani officials responded with assurances that the over 80,000 Pakistani soldiers in the frontier tribal areas were prepared to respond to useful intelligence passed to them, and that Pakistani forces are tightening border passage to Afghanistan. With scanners and passports, cross border movement could be even more restricted. The Pakistani delegation also noted an increase in border violations by Coalition Forces since the last Tripartite meeting in December. (Note: Contrary to press reports, the Bajaur

incident was not specifically mentioned, though this was likely the intended reference. The US response was to the, Pakistan's complaint while emphasizing the need to take effective measures to counter the threat posed by the common enemy.)

Building Security Through Reconstruction

17. (C) All participants agreed that reconstruction and economic and political development are crucial to improving security in the border areas. Pakistani Director of Military Operations, Brigadier General Nasser Janjua, presented a comprehensive Pakistan strategy for improving security in the FATA through military, political and development means. The CFC-A Regional Command) East Commander, Colonel Pat Donahue the Governor of Khowst, Merajoddin Pathan, and the Khowst PRT Commander Lieutenant Colonel Sammons presented a similar three-pronged strategy for improving security and enhancing development in that province. LTG Eikenberry noted the similarities of these strategies and encouraged greater Pakistani-Afghan coordination and collaboration in these efforts to improve conditions on both sides of the border, pointing out that tribes and clans span both sides of a common border, thus necessitating a common strategy. LTG Eikenberry's Wrap-Up and Proposals

18. (S) LTG Eikenberry closed the meeting with three proposals for the Pakistan delegation (already vetted and approved by the ANA delegation). He announced that CJTF-76 is presently planning "Operation Mountain Lion", a coordinated Afghan-CFC

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spring offensive against the Taliban. He suggested that the Pakistan Army be included in aspects of the operational planning with the aim of achieving common effects on both sides of the border. The second proposal was that the Tripartite's successful Border Security Subcommittee be expanded to RC South starting in April and include participation by the Canadian RC South Multi-National Brigade Commander. The Pakistani side welcomed this idea, but indicated on the margins of the meeting that it is unsure if the counterpart would be the Frontier Corps or 12th Corps, pointing out that unlike 11th Corps stationed in Peshawar, 12th Corps was not deployed along the Afghan-Pakistan border. They will consider options and re-engage. LTG Eikenberry's third proposal was that NATO representation at the April tripartite in Pakistan be upgraded and that NATO become a full Tripartite member in June, sharing the third leg of the Tripartite with CFC -) in the run up to NATO Stage three transition in the South later in the summer and stage four thereafter. These proposals met with approval in principle, with details to be worked out. Both delegations concurred with the CFC proposal to backbrief the results of the mid-March AFG-PAK Mil seminar at the Marshall center in Germany on common security issues -) the first in a series of planned conferences aimed at developing common perspectives on security and nurturing personal and professional relationships among Pakistani and Afghan officers at the 05 and 06 (Lt Col and colonel) levels. Two dates were suggested for the next Tripartite Commission meeting (a 4-star event) in Islamabad: April 11-13 or April 18-20.

Comments

19. (S) The 15th Tripartite Commission meeting highlighted the Afghans' frustration over continued IED and suicide attacks in Afghanistan, and their conviction that Pakistan could do more. Though LTG Karimi did his best to reframe their observations in diplomatic terms, his DGMI and the Governor of Khowst delivered tough messages. The Pakistanis responded by defending their efforts and going on the offensive, challenging the Afghans to do more to combat gun-running into

Balochistan and narcotics trafficking. The discussion was frank but the tone was controlled throughout and the sides parted with embraces at end of the session. More importantly, over the past months the concept of a common enemy has taken firm root in underpinning the need for these discussions. Afghans and Pakistanis also recognize the fragility of the relationship, given the inherent lack of trust. The problem of trust can be overcome to the extent exchanges like these generate action on each side, and also through tangible successes such as those produced by the Border Security Subcommittee and, prospectively, by cooperation in Operation Mountain Lion. Still, improved military operational effectiveness must be achieved in the coming year or the Tripartite Talks will be seen by the Afghan side as without substance.

¶10. (S) Considerable progress is being made in setting the stage for expanded Coalition-Afghan-Pakistani military coordination across the Balochistan border (i.e. CFC-A Regional Command) South, Afghan National Army 205th Corps, and either the Pakistan army's 12th Corps or the Frontier Corps), as well as for a seamless NATO-ISAF transition into the lead international military position in the Tripartite Talks. This will be important for the Coalition and NATO, as well as key individual nations (UK, Canada, etc.) during the upcoming command changes in Afghanistan. Offers to exchange liaison officers (LNOs) initiated outside of the Tripartite framework risk confusing Kabul and Islamabad, and undermining their confidence in the continuity and coherence of the process.
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